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Montana Pupil Transportation
News and Updates
March 2003



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A Monthly Newsletter Published by Pupil Transportation, School Budgeting and Accounting Division

TRANSPORTATION PAYMENT INFORMATION IS NOW ON THE TRANSPORTATION WEB SITE

Go to www.opi.state.mt.us and select <Pupil Transportation> from the drop down menu of Programs and Services at OPI. Payment information can be found in the yellow box to the right under the heading "Payments." Click there and follow the links to the payment advices in county folders. Click on your county and find your district information. There are three kinds of folders, Transportation Contracts, Bus Routes, and Reimbursement Reports.

ALSO

I know it is only March but it is time to start getting ready for next year. TR-4 Forms are being preprinted for the first time. OPI has utilized the information from the 2003 contract information to preprint district information along with any parent information that might not change from one year to the next. These forms, once completed are due to the County Superintendent by July 1st.

Please let me know if you have any suggestions or comments regarding the preprinting of this form. Email any comments to me at mmougeot@state.mt.us.

Since You Asked

Do our substitute drivers really need to receive 10 hours of training??

The answer to this question is YES. By law, all certified drivers are required to attend at least 10 hours of annual training.

By Board of Public Education rule, Standards for School Buses in Montana – 2002 became affective on August 16, 2002. In the Operations section of the standards, page C-43 clearly defines the training program that must be designed and implemented by each school district. It is clear that all certified drivers of a yellow school bus must be included in a school district's driver-training program.

When are we going to get the transportation reimbursement?

First semester transportation reimbursements were paid in March. Second semester reimbursements will be paid in June. The Office of Public Instruction includes the transportation payment with the State Aid payment to the County Treasurer for deposit into the district's account. Payment advice to the county superintendent and school district is now available on the transportation website at www.opi.state.mt.us and select <Pupil Transportation> from the drop down menu of Programs and Services at OPI. Payment information can be found in the yellow box to the right under the heading "Payments." Click there and follow the links to the payment advices in county folders. **The March mailing will be the last time districts will receive a paper copy of the payment information.**

DRIVER TRAINING OPPORTUNITY OF THE YEAR

MAPT Conference Information

The Montana Association for Pupil Transportation is sending out the registration forms for the June 18-20, 2003 Conference to be held at the Butte Copper King. The conference title is "Proud to Be in 2003." Registration is due to Linda Michel at MAPT by June 1st. The registration fee is \$70 if paid by June 1.

Session speakers and topics look very interesting. Be sure to register for the Jackpot Road-e-o. The fee for the Road-e-o is just \$5.00 per driver.

Butte Transportation Director Mel Rauch has done a great job as site Chairman. The Steering Committee is committed to having an educational and fun conference. Sign up early and get the discount.

Driver and School Bus Aide Nominations Requested

Enclosed with this mailing are the forms to nominate your favorite driver, bus aide, and special needs driver for the Montana Highway Patrol Driver of the Year, Montana Highway Patrol School Bus Aid of the Year and Q'Straints Special Needs Driver of the Year. Please be sure to nominate someone from your school transportation program for these awards.



Please be sure to include the names and information of all drivers who have 25 years or more of service. This form is available in the Conference packet. This information should be mailed to Marilyn Leazenby, Transportation Director, Fort Benton Public Schools, PO Box 399, Fort Benton, MT 59442. Please help to recognize and thank all of these drivers.

NATIONAL NEWS

The National Transportation Safety Board released documents concerning the October 13, 2001 Omaha crash recently. School Bus Fleet magazine has an interesting article regarding this crash and student evacuation procedures. Students reported that they were unaware of some of the emergency exit windows and most of the students exited through the two roof hatches. Some students said that they had not had evacuation training in several years. Other students said that they couldn't remember receiving any evacuation training. District personnel stated that evacuation training was being done and had been documented.

This particular bus, a 78-passenger transit-style bus, had luggage racks that obscured the Emergency Exit signs at the rear of the bus.

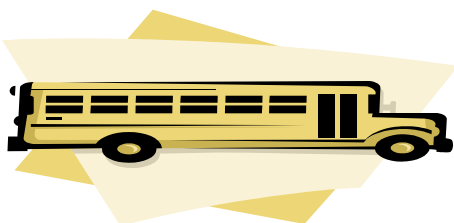
This accident resulted in 4 deaths and more than two dozen minor to severe injuries.

Evacuation training for both school bus drivers and students should be done once during each semester. Nearly all students ride the bus at one time or another during the years they spend at school. Students and drivers should be trained to evacuate both the yellow school bus they ride to and from school each day, plus any transit type buses that they might travel in for school related activities.

Federal Highway Standard 17 requires that emergency evacuation drills be conducted within the first five days of school and at least twice each year. Students transported in a school vehicle should be instructed in safe riding practices and participate in emergency evacuation drills.

If your district does not currently have an ongoing training program in place that provides adequate evacuation training, please call Maxine Mougeot at (406) 444-3096 or email at mmougeot@state.mt.us.

With the help of Buffy Woodring, B & L Transfer of Townsend, OPI has put together a packet of information that will help your district establish an Evacuation Program.



LOCAL NEWS

Driver training opportunities are beginning to appear around the state. Daylong training provided each October by MAPT President, Renee Shanks, is in Fromberg. County wide training occurs in November in Lewistown for Fergus County drivers provided by Shirley Barrick, Fergus County Superintendent. In addition:

- Mark Simenson from Absarokee organized an excellent 5-hour training for drivers in Billings on March 3rd. About 35 drivers attended.
- Les Cabot from Joliet organized driver and student evacuation training on March 4th. All of Joliet's drivers were there.
- Bob Sackman from Sackman Transportation organized a full day of training in Drummond on March 15th. 122+ drivers from approximately 20 schools participated in this 8 hour training.

These trainings have been well received and well attended. Speakers included:

1. The Montana Highway Patrol;
2. Prudy Holmun, The Department of Transportation;
3. Luke Avery, Safety Specialist from Karst Stage – Bozeman;
4. Doug Kellie, Transportation Director – Belgrade;
5. Virginia Delande, PLUK – Missoula;
6. Jack Welch, Billings Truck Center – Billings;
7. Rick Flink and Joe Pierce, Operation Lifesaver; and
8. OPI staff.

These folks have all been working hard to provide quality training. I want to encourage transportation directors and contractors in other areas of the state to work with school administrators, county superintendents or OPI staff to begin setting up trainings. Districts can work together to keep costs down and provide quality training.



Spring has arrived.



PROMPTLY RETURN TRAINING VIDEOS

IMPORTANT DATES

March 25, 2003 Transportation Aid Reimbursement made to Counties for distribution to schools

March 25, 2003 OPI mails registration forms for June MAPT Conference to transportation community

April 25, 2003 Second Semester TR-5's and TR-6's mailed from the OPI to districts

May 10, 2003 Second Semester TR-5's and TR-6's due from districts to county superintendent

May 24, 2003 Second Semester TR-5's and TR-6's due from county superintendents to the OPI

June 18, 19, 20, 2003 MAPT Conference in Butte, Montana

Update driver certificates, bus inspection forms, route information and contracts regularly.